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Name:	International Travel Risk Management
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A global perspective is essential to Saint Mary's academic mission, and the University has long supported international travel to conduct research, study cultures and languages, promote collaboration with institutions in other countries, represent the University, and for other academic, administrative, and authorized student activities. The University is also committed to the safety and well-being of its students, faculty and staff when they participate in these activities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to set standards to enable safe travel experiences abroad. This will be done by ensuring that University-supported or University-related international travel is conducted in a responsible and safe manner, and by providing risk management resources to enable travellers to be informed of and manage the risks associated with travelling internationally. A review process will assess the risk associated with the travel, which will then enable the University to better respond to emergency situations.

Who needs to follow this policy?

Any student, faculty or staff member proposing to undertake University-supported or University-related international travel must follow the appropriate review, registration, and preparation requirements set forth in this policy. University travellers must also ensure that they have adequate health, emergency and liability insurance (if required) for international travel.

Procedures for planning travel

This policy recognizes that the initiation of travel plans may take a variety of forms. Staff international travel is often at the request (at the very least, with the approval) of the department chair/director or unit head. Faculty travel for research or conferences is usually self-initiated, although it may include a request for funding

from the University. There are no formal review processes for faculty or staff other than those required by individual department or unit policies. However, once students become involved in international travel sponsored or approved by the University, we (including those within the University directly supervising the student traveller) have a greater degree of responsibility to ensure that the activity is conducted in a safe manner.

Risk assessment

The University uses the risk levels assigned by the Government of Canada (GOC) in its assessment of risk on its travel website. This system divides the level of risk into four categories:

<i>Risk level</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Level 1 (low)	Exercise normal security precautions	There are no significant security concerns.
Level 2 (medium)	Exercise high degree of caution	There are identifiable security concerns within the country as a whole or within specific regions in the country, and travellers should be alert and vigilant to their surroundings.
Level 3 (high)	Avoid non-essential travel	There are specific security concern(s) within the country as a whole or within specific regions in the country, and travellers should reconsider their need to travel at this time.
Level 4 (extreme)	Avoid all travel	There is an extreme risk to personal safety and travel should not be planned for this country or region at this time. Non-residents in this country or specified regions should leave, if it is safe to do so.

Note that the GOC risk level may apply to the whole country or different risk levels may be assigned to specific regions within the country. Travellers must check for the risk level for the specific region to which they are travelling.

Changes to risk ratings

Should the GOC Travel Advisory Risk Rating of a country or region be increased to a level 3 or level 4 while travellers are participating in University Activities, travellers are required to follow the direction of the University. This may involve leaving the region or country if instructed by the University to do so. Travellers who refuse to follow the instructions of the University will be considered to be on unauthorized travel and the University is no longer obliged to provide support or emergency assistance.

Pre-travel requirements

All travel involving students must be approved by the appropriate Dean, Director or Vice President. Depending on the degree of risk, this may be in the form of a Letter of Permission, a Travel Risk Assessment (individual or group) and/or a Research Hazards Assessment (individual). The tables below set out the pre-travel requirements for faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students. The first table

is for individual faculty and staff members travelling with or without students. The second table is for students, divided between undergraduate and graduate. Note that the University will not support or condone any student travel to areas with an extreme (4) risk level and will approve student travel to high (3) risk level areas only for graduate students and only in very specific circumstances.

For individual faculty and staff travellers

<i>Type of faculty or staff international travel</i>	<i>Required written approvals</i>	<i>Travel registry required</i>	<i>Release of liability form</i>
Without students to low or medium risk destinations	None , unless otherwise required by individual department or unit policies	Yes, for all travellers	No
Without students to high risk destinations	None , unless otherwise required by individual department or unit policies. Travellers are urged to carefully assess the need to travel to high-risk destinations	Yes, for all travellers	No
Without students to extreme risk destinations	None , unless otherwise required by individual department or unit policies. Travellers are strongly recommended to postpone travel or identify alternative travel destinations	Yes, for all travellers	No
With students to low or medium risk destinations	Dean/Director/VP Activity sponsor(s) will be responsible for preparing the travel proposal and risk assessment	Yes (may register as a group)	Yes
With students to high risk destinations	Dean/Director/VP Activity sponsor(s) will need to demonstrate that travel to this destination is essential	Yes	Yes
With students to extreme risk destinations	Students cannot be taken to extreme risk destinations	n/a	n/a

For students

Undergraduate students				
<i>Type of international travel</i>	<i>Required written approvals</i>	<i>Travel registry</i>	<i>Release of liability form</i>	<i>Pre-departure briefing</i>
Undergraduate students travelling individually to another country to participate in an academic program for credit or transfer credit at SMU	Letter of Permission Travel risk assessment form	Required	Required	Advised

Undergraduate students travelling as a group to another country to participate in an academic program for credit or transfer credit at SMU	Group travel risk assessment (to be completed by Activity Sponsor)	Required	Required	Advised
Undergraduate students travelling individually for internship/research purposes connected to their academic work	Travel risk assessment OR Research hazard assessment	Required	Required	Required
Undergraduate students travelling for non-credit purposes (e.g. conferences)	Travel risk assessment	Required	Required	Required
Graduate students				
<i>Type of international travel</i>	<i>Required written approvals</i>	<i>Travel registry</i>	<i>Release of liability form</i>	<i>Pre-departure briefing</i>
Graduate students travelling individually to another country to participate in an academic program for credit or transfer credit at SMU	Travel risk assessment Letter of permission	Required	Required	Advised
Graduate students travelling as a group on a program organized by SMU faculty for academic study	Group risk assessment (to be completed by Activity Sponsor)	Required	Required	Advised
Graduate students travelling individually for internship or research purposes connected to their academic work	Research Hazards Assessment (FGSR)	Required	Required	Required
Graduate students travelling for non-credit purposes (e.g. conferences)	Travel risk assessment	Required	Required	Advised
Non-student interns				
Non-SMU personnel travelling for internship	Risk assessment (prepared by IAO)	Required	Required	Required

To ensure that the University can assist all travellers in case of emergency, all travellers are required to register their travel with the International Activities Office (IAO). See the IAO website for more details on the travel registry. The IAO can also assist with assessments of the security level for international destinations. Requests

for this assessment may come from the international travellers him/herself, from the faculty or staff members organizing the travel or from the Dean, Vice President or Director overseeing the travel.

All student travellers should also participate in one of the regularly scheduled (2-3 times per year) general pre-departure briefings for students travelling internationally. Interested faculty and staff are also welcome to join these sessions, although the IAO can also provide individual briefings for faculty and staff travelling on University business. Specific pre-departure briefings can be held for students travelling in groups. If, for some reason, students are not able to participate in these formal briefings, they should contact the IAO to make arrangements for personal, telephone, or on-line briefings.

All travellers (students, faculty and staff) planning to travel abroad for a purpose other than a University Activity do so as private citizens. Such travellers are solely responsible for making their own travel arrangements and making their own decisions regarding personal safety.

Insurance

Prior to departure, all individuals who undertake international travel must ensure that they have adequate health and travel insurance for their destination. This insurance should include medical (including repatriation), personal health, dental and accident insurance coverage, as well as adequate protection of personal possessions for the entire duration of the stay abroad.

Note that individual insurance companies have varying policies relating to coverage in specific countries. These policies may be more restrictive than GOC recommendations. You are strongly advised to inform your insurance company of your travel plans and verify if your coverage extends to the country(ies) to or through which you intend to travel. You may need to purchase additional travel insurance. Faculty and staff may be reimbursed for this expense if they are travelling on University-sponsored business.

Preparedness and review of pertinent information

Prior to departure, all international travellers must review the Government of Canada website (travel.gc.ca) travel warnings, travel planning resources and other pertinent information. All travellers should also consider registering with in-destination-country consular officials for the country through which they hold the passport on which they are travelling. Canadians should use the Registration of Canadians Abroad system at the GOC Travel website (travel.gc.ca/travelling/registration).

All travellers should provide a detailed travel itinerary and contact information while in travel status to the International Activities Office. IAO should also be advised of subsequent changes to the travel itinerary. This information will be held in confidence and will not be released to third parties without the consent of the traveller.

All travellers should ensure that they have the required travel documentation (passport valid for at least six months after end of travel and appropriate visas) and immunizations (in consultation with a qualified Travel Clinic).

Travel and related expenses

International travellers who will incur expenses to be paid or reimbursed by the University must follow the policies and procedures laid out on the travel policy page of the SMU website.

Travel planning and responsibilities

The University provides resources and support services aimed at facilitating safe travel experiences for all international travellers. The University maintains the International Activities Office to, among other functions, educate international travellers about health and safety issues, facilitate international travel in a safe manner, and act as a resource for international travellers. However, the University cannot ensure that international travel will be problem free or account for all the potential health and safety risks that international travellers might experience.

All international travellers have the primary responsibility to prepare themselves in advance of international travel, to research and be aware of the risks involved in their planned trip, to ensure that they are physically and mentally prepared for the travel, to ensure they have appropriate medical and other insurance for the travel, to conduct themselves in a safe manner while travelling, and to bring any concerns they may have to the attention of the senior University official at the place of travel (if any) as well as the International Activities Office as soon as possible after the concern arises.

The University has no control over international events and will not be responsible to refund any costs or losses, including the loss of timely academic progress, associated with Student travel or the cancellation of Student travel. This will be the case whether:

- The Student travel is not authorized pursuant to this Policy; or
- Authorization for travel is revoked pursuant to this Policy; or
- The Student does not travel because of concerns for personal safety.

Related policies:

Travel – Emergency Travel Insurance ([Policy 4-3008](#))

Travel – Transportation ([Policy 4-3003](#))

Travel – Foreign Currency Reporting ([Policy 4-3013](#))

Related forms

Program Agreement and Release of Liability, Assumption of Risks and Indemnity Agreement

Travel risk assessment and management strategy (for all non-research travel)

Research Hazards Assessment